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SUBJECT: UNSC 1540 COMMITTEE: NEW WEBSITE, PROGRESS ON 1673  
REPORT AND FUTURE THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

REF: USUN 866

11. SUMMARY: On November 14, the Security Council's 1540 Committee discussed the Committee's new website, plans to inform regional groups about the Committee's recent letter requesting information from States and transmitting the Committee's implementation matrices to them, and the possibility of holding a thematic Committee discussion on biosecurity and biosafety. The 1540 panel of experts also gave a brief update on its preparation of the report the Committee will present to the Security Council next April, pursuant to resolution 1673. As to assistance decisions, Committee members asked the Chairman for more time to consider last-minute changes proposed by South Africa. The next 1540 Committee meeting will take place during the week of November 19 - 23. END SUMMARY.

12. Committee members began the meeting with a presentation from the Secretariat's Department of Public Information on the new 1540 Committee website. The new website will have a more user-friendly appearance with easier access to resources such as Committee documents and papers, the directory of assistance, national reports, States' implementation matrices, and the legislative database. The site will also have useful features for States, including reporting guidelines and the assistance template. States will be able to use the website to email assistance information to the Committee once the assistance template is finalized. To address the preference of some States to limit the dissemination of their matrices and assistance requests, the Secretariat will work with the Committee to develop a

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password-protected site that is separate from the public website. USUN emphasized that the Committee's website should make documents from all of the 1540-related workshops available.

13. The Chairman informed members that many Permanent Representatives have approached him with questions on how to respond to the Committee's most recent letter requesting information and transmitting States' implementation matrices (reftel). The Chairman proposed meeting with regional groups at the expert level to answer missions' questions about the letter and assistance matrices. USUN suggested sending a letter also to regional organizations to raise their members' awareness of the letter and the need for States to consent to having the Committee post their assistance matrices on the 1540 website. Delegations voiced support for this approach. Russia, however, said that the Committee should first have a chance to review the list of invited organizations and the text of the invitation letter. UK suggested using the list of organizations already agreed to at the Counter-terrorism Committee's October meeting with other international and regional organizations in Nairobi, which one of the 1540 Committee's experts attended.

¶4. The 1540 panel of experts coordinator briefed the Committee on the preparation of the Committee's report to the Security Council, which must be submitted by April 27, 2008 pursuant to resolution 1673. He said the panel circulated a preliminary report and was now reviewing and updating matrices using information from official websites and the legislative database. South Africa asked for a list indicating which experts were assigned to specific matrices and a roadmap on the report's preparation with deadlines for each section's completion. Russia warned that the Committee should not micromanage the panel of experts, but said a mechanism for reviewing the report's progress would be useful. UK's representative stressed the need to complete the report and said the Committee might have to move forward based on the best information available, even if the Committee does not have all responses from States.

¶5. Committee members asked the Chairman for more time to consider South Africa's proposed changes to two decisions relating to the Committee's work on technical assistance. The Chairman agreed, but asked members to bring the issue to a close as quickly as possible. (Comment: Since the meeting, UKUN has expressed concern to USUN about South Africa's changes. END COMMENT.)

¶6. The 1540 panel of experts briefly introduced biosafety and biosecurity as possible topics for future thematic discussions within the Committee. The panel noted that biosafety and biosecurity measures could assist with the implementation of resolution 1540. According to the panel of experts, by exploring the complexity and dual-use nature of biotechnologies, the Committee could suggest measures to build States' capacity to prevent the prohibited use of such technology, without restricting its use for legitimate purposes. The panel noted anti-trafficking activities and cooperative initiatives with industry and public health representatives as possible measures to assist 1540 implementation. The Chairman suggested the Committee begin a discussion on these topics during its next meeting. Russia said it would not be in a position to begin discussions without a background paper on these topics from the panel of experts. (NOTE: In a previous meeting, South Africa and Russia indicated reservations about biosafety and biosecurity measures because of their potential to impinge on legitimate trade. END NOTE.)

¶7. The next Committee meeting will likely take place during the week of November 19 - 23.  
Khalilzad